Citizens vs. Refugees: Concepts and Applications of Islamic Solidarity in Turkey and the UK

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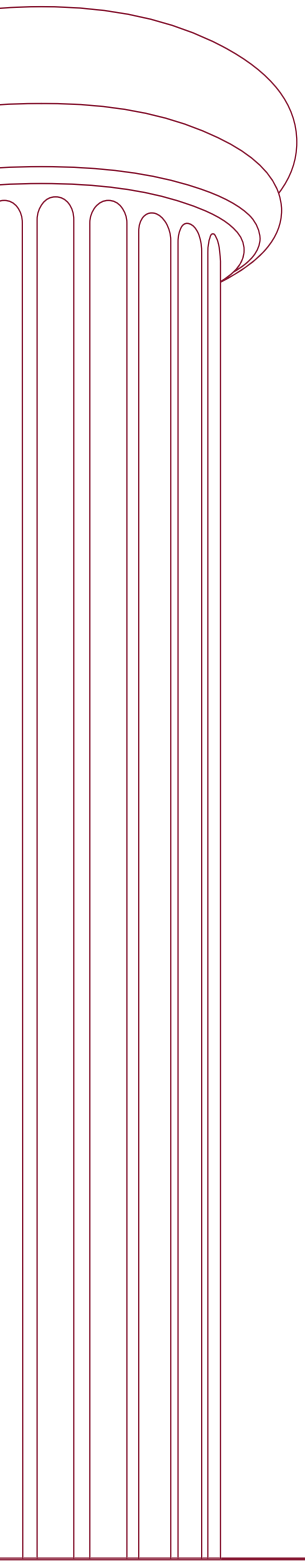

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1. Introduction

During the last few years, the Arab Spring resulted in peaceful uprisings, militant clashes, and theoretical debates in many countries with various social and political contexts. In a globalized world, and due to de facto spreading out, one of the intensively debated issues has revolved around the flux of Arab refugees to Europe. Dominantly Muslims, those immigrants raise many controversial questions related to their hosting European societies, including the extent to which the old continent will continue to look "Christian" or even "European" after few decades.

Muslim communities in European countries have been involved in these crucial debates. On one hand, they are European citizens, with all relevant rights and duties. But on the other hand, they belong to the Muslim *Ummah* (worldwide nation), which mandates Islamic solidarity and religiously-prescribed close relationships with all Muslims. Practically, the reactions of Muslim communities in Europe to this mandate vary from country to country.

Practically, these legal relationships between state and various communities play a crucial role in shaping the scope of action for religious communities within the arena of civil society. In this paper, I will focus mainly on the socially-constructed relationships between Muslim communities in Europe and her states to explore their scope of action as far as the issue of Muslim refugees in Europe is concerned.

I will build on Michael Barnett and Janice Grass Stein's argument that secularization and sanctification are multi-layered, multidimensional, and nonlinear. Basically, they contend that historically-constructed processes first establish sacred and secular concepts and spaces, then, different actors can serve their agendas by employing strategies to set, stabilize and modify those concepts and spaces (Barnett and Stein: 11). Applying this argument, I select Turkey and Great Britain as case studies to compare the similarities and differences between Muslim communal organisations in a Muslim-majority state seeking EU membership, and their counterparts in a Muslim-minority state seeking to depart from the EU. I argue that although Muslims are religiously committed to showing solidarity with each other, the dynamics of Islamic *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) allow them to construct various interpretations and implementations of this solidarity, given the social and political contexts. The reaction to the refugees' issue in Europe is not an exception; rather, Muslim communities always vary in their socially constructed understandings of Islamic sacred rules and strategies of political actions.

The first section reviews the main concepts of Islamic Solidarity, citizens, and refugees. Then, the second section analyses socioeconomic and political bases of the relations between Muslim communal organisations in Turkey and the UK states, and the impact on how Muslim citizens treat Muslim refugees. The third section investigates the strategies and outcomes of main Islamic humanitarian institutions in these countries concerning the issue of refugees.

Humanitarian organisations or social movements, other than Islamic ones, are not applicable cases for examining Islamic solidarity. I study principally the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) in Turkey, known initially as the Foundation of Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief, and the Islamic Relief in the UK. The conclusion reflects on their potential influences in future developments of this issue in European countries.

2. Conceptual Framework

Understanding the critical relationships between local citizens and foreign refugees in the light of Islamic solidary requires conceptual clarifications of three main concepts: Islamic solidarity, refugees, and citizens. This section discusses these concepts and examines their interrelationship.

2.1 Islamic Solidarity

2.1.1 Meaning

The concept of Islamic solidarity is defined as a set of actions taken to supporting, caring for, or defending Muslim males and females (brothers and sisters). Mutual religious faith is the influential requirement for showing this solidarity. The Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) once said:

"The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever". [Al-Bukhari and Muslim: Book 1, Hadith 224][1].

The Prophet also said, stressing the unconditionality of showing solidarity:

"Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor, or he is an oppressed one. People asked, "O Allah's Messenger! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet said, "By preventing him from oppressing others." (Sahih al-Bukhari 2444; Book 46, Hadith 5)[2].

These statements clarify the obligation of Islamic solidarity. Muslims *must* show support to their male and female counterparts, as the *believers* are like the whole body. The obligation comes from sharing religious faiths, regardless of the believers' stands. In addition, the second statement explains differences of solidarity with the oppressed and the oppressors: It means defending the oppressed and backing them to get rid of oppression and enjoy their rights, while preventing the oppressors from their oppression, thus saving them from punishment in the Hereafter. Interestingly, Islamic solidarity goes beyond physical caring to satisfying spiritual needs. For example, Mayke Kaag acknowledged the role of Islamic humanitarian relief in Chad

[1] https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/1/224
[2] https://sunnah.com/bukhari/46

as not only fulfilling the materialistic needs but also creating a new concept of community of the faithful (Kaag: 464).

The position of non-Muslims in this paradigm might be controversial. Islamic jurisprudence allows a wide space for various understandings and implementations in this regard. One group of theologians and scholars argue that non-Muslims are potential Muslims, so they are qualified to receive *Zakat* (religiously obligatory charity) as the main source of financial support. They understand the concept of the poor as those who deserve *Zakat*, whether Muslim or non-Muslim[3]. Based on a humanitarian perspective, they encourage the support of needy non-Muslims, unconnected from calling them to Islam[4]. Consequently, while the UK-based Islamic Relief provides aid for non-Muslims without calling them to Islam (Mayke Kaag: 465), Another prestigious, UK-based organisation, Muslim Aid, restricts its aid to Muslims (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 10). In short, although Islamic solidarity is an obligation among Muslims due to their shared religion, its implementation varies per case.

2.1.2 Levels and Political Limitations

Islamic solidarity is not limited in the *Qur'an* nor in the *Sunnah* (the Prophet's sayings and deeds) to specific actions. As in various issues in Islamic jurisprudence, the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* give only general instructions and leave the practicalities to be determined in accordance with the changing realities and conditions and personal and societal capabilities and evaluations.

In *Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in The Muslim World*, Jonathan Benthall, and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan classify Islamic solidarity, based on the Afghani experience, into three correlated levels; *Jihad* (fighting), *Da'wa* (call for Islam, which the authors translate inaccurately as militancy) and *Ighatha* (humanitarian relief). During the 1980s, the Afghani war against Soviet occupation resulted in a huge campaign for showing Islamic solidarity on these three correlated levels (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 69-74). Unlike Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, I argue that this campaign, though partially official, received a significant support from Muslim masses due to feelings of religious obligation. Because of the Cold War, it also enjoyed obvious regional and international encouragement.

[3] In accordance with Islamic rules, Muslims must pay *Zakat* (religiously obligatory charity) to any of the seven categories specified in The Qur'an. One of them concerns the newly converted Muslims. Another one, "for the Sake of Allah", is so general as to include them as well. Also, Muslims are advised to pay additional voluntary charities, with unlimited amounts, and for unspecified categories. Charity in general aims at showing solidarity with humanity, with priority usually given to Muslims, but unlimited to them. It spreads to non-Muslims and even animals. For more details, see: Khaled Mansour and Heba Raouf Ezzat, "Faith-Based Action in Development and Humanitarian Work" (In) Ashwani Kumar, Jan Art Scholte, Mary Kaldor, Marlies Glasius, Hakan Seckinelgin, Helmut Anheier (eds.) Global Civil Society, London: Sage, 2009, p.123.

[4] For details on this discussion, see: Jonathan Benthall, and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan, The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World (London: I. B. Tauris, 2nd Edition, 2009) p.10

Muslims of several nationalities arrived in Afghanistan to fight the Soviet Union, while others practiced *Da'wa* (call for Islam) to explain correct Islamic rituals and concepts to their less knowledgeable brothers and sisters, especially non-Arabs. Humanitarian relief was a caring service for both civilians and *Mujahedeen* (fighters). Muslims freely changed their roles in these categories based on appropriateness, because each is accepted by the targeted publics and fulfils a religious obligation.

For Islamic institutions and communities, this appropriateness is not merely based on individual wills. Practicing Islamic solidarity depends on calculations of *Maslaha* (benefit) and *Mafsadah* (harm) for the whole community, in the light of *Maqassid al-Shari'ah* (the ultimate goals of Islamic jurisprudence), which include the protection of faith, reason, life, honour and wealth. Furthermore, the absence of a hierarchical religious institution in Islamic traditions allows for a variety of interpretations and implementations of Islamic rules and obligations. Based on different calculations of benefits and harms, several readings were developed, and consequently various paths were taken, as the showing of Islamic solidarity has been a continuous practice throughout Islamic history, in physical, spiritual and financial terms, and on the individual and institutionalized levels.

Shortly after the end of the Afghani war in the early 1990s, previously acknowledged sorts of Islamic solidarity were soon labelled terrorist. Both US administrations and local governments in Muslim countries, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia, accused foreign supporters in the Afghani and Bosnian wars of being terrorists (Mansour and Ezzat: 123-129). However, most such accusations targeted militant and proselytizing activists, while humanitarian relief, which was considered a new promising form of Islamic solidarity, was set aside. Simultaneously, UK-based Islamic Relief was received significant domestic and international support, as a leading Muslim humanitarian relief organisation in a Western context.

Humanitarian relief turned to be the sole, internationally-recognized activity of Islamic solidarity. For instance, Carlo Benedetti explains the "100 percent Islamic solidarity chain" as Islamic *philanthropic* organisations that use religious rituals, like *Zakat* (obligatory charity) and *Sadaqat* (optional charity), to raise fund through Islamic financial institutions to achieve recommended Islamic actions in favour of Muslims (Benedetti: 855)[5]. Accordingly, Islamic Relief is not a "100 percent Islamic solidarity chain" because its activities do not distinguish between Muslims and Non-Muslims, and it does not require total Islamic commitment from its members or employees. Thus, Benedetti defines it as a moderate Islamic NGO, distinct from

[5] For details on using Islamic finance in Islamic humanitarian relief, see: Jonathan Benthall and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan (2009): *The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2nd Edition, pp.29-44

strict organisations of Islamic chain which usually define their mission in terms of proselytization and are therefore described as militant Islamic NGOs (Benedetti: 856).

Since the mid-1990s, some Arab governments and US administrations have increasingly used the “terrorist” label to condemn any militant struggle, regardless of its justification. For example, the Palestinian group Hamas, which used to be considered a resistance movement, is now labelled a terrorist group (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 77). Benedetti traces a similar pattern of religious solidarity behaviour in Christianity, as many Christian humanitarian relief organisations, with certain religious or ideological, commitments, were largely involved in militant and proselytizing activities, beside their humanitarian roles (Benedetti: 856). Surprisingly, these cases have rarely been labelled terrorist.

Consequently, the concept of Islamic solidarity has been limited to humanitarian relief, while proselytization is condemned, and militant struggle criminalized. This was not appealing to many Muslims, who criticized Western governments severely during the Bosnian conflict for doing nothing except providing humanitarian relief. Also, Muslim humanitarian relief organisations faced similar criticisms from militant Islamic entities, as the humanitarian programs of the former were a weak form of commitment (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 82). However, religious legacies “are always selectively rebuilt to fulfil contemporary objectives” (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 154).

2.2 Refugees

A refugee is defined as “the person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (Hein and Niazi: 728).

From a legal perspective, there are technical differences, based on duties and rights, between Internally Displaced People (IDP), refugees and asylum-seekers. IDP live in their home country, having been relocated away from home; they have not fled beyond international borders. To the contrary, refugees have fled their land beyond borders to another country. The receiving country has an obligation to not return them home, in the fear of oppression. This is known as the principle of Non-Refoulment. They have a temporary status until they decide voluntarily to return home or seek asylum in the receiving country or elsewhere. Asylum-seekers apply for citizenship and obtain legal rights until a decision is taken regarding their applications. During the processing of the application, which might continue for several years, asylum seekers cannot work but enjoy financial support, free medical care and legal counsel (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh: 298).

In the European context, the refugee has become an issue after World War II, with resulted in two million refugees, mostly European. Therefore, the Geneva Refugee Convention was adopted in 1951. A couple of decades later, the number of refugees from Africa and Asia increased significantly, due to the struggle against colonialism in their countries. Since the 1990s, refugees have turned to be an Islamic phenomenon emerging from several countries, including Bosnia, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Myanmar, and later and more significantly Syria (Hein and Niazi: 728).

Suna Gulfer Ihlamur-Oner traces a new international system for refugees' protection, acknowledging the receiving countries' efforts, but also stressing the responsibility of the sending countries that forced the refugees to flee. This system significantly functioned in the Iraqi-Kurdish crisis and Yugoslavia's crisis in the 1990s and allowed for a sort of humanitarian intervention in the sending countries (Ihlamur-Oner:199). Similar efforts, however, are still far away in Syria's considerably more profound crisis.

From a religious point of view, Prophet Muhammed's migration from Mecca to Madinah in Western Arabia in 622 was a turning point in Islamic history. It marked the establishment of the first Islamic state and the beginning of the Islamic calendar. His followers who were forced to migrate from Mecca (the *Muhajireen*), and the others who received them in Madinah (the *Ansar*), are very appreciated by successive Muslim generations. Thus, the concept of fleeing from any sort of oppression is valued among Muslims and generates a considerable collective solidarity. For instance, granting asylum for refugees is recommended in Islam and an integral part of the Islamic concept of human rights. Some Muslim jurists go further to consider it an Islamic obligation (Kirmani and Khan: 2-3).

Showing solidarity with refugees is an Islamic obligation regardless of the abovementioned, technical classifications and their subsequent legal rights. But observing the differences between these categories is important for Muslims to plan *how* they show solidarity with their brother and sisters. In short, Islamic solidarity is a religious obligation, while its modalities vary depending on benefits and harms.

From a different religious perspective, Hein and Niazi study the receiving by India of Buddhist refugees, including the Dalai Lama, after their failed uprising against Chinese occupation in 1959, as partially due to close ties between Buddhism and Hinduism (Hein and Niazi: 735). This means that religious ties, in Islam and other religions, could be one of the main incentives to welcoming refugees, alongside with other humanitarianism factors.

2.3 Citizens

The concept of citizenship has legal and social dimensions and little to do with religion. Legally, citizens, whether at home or abroad, have a certain set of duties and rights, regardless of their

methods of acquiring citizenship. Refugees are potential citizens if they enjoy the possibility of seeking asylum. Becoming a citizen should be a head start for achieving a degree of social integration with other citizens of in the country. However, this is not always the case because social integration concerns not only citizenship but more importantly the sharing of a culture, values, norms and perhaps a religion. Consequently, citizens assimilating the main values of a society might be fully integrated into it, while others feel alienated, although they continue to enjoy full legal rights. For example, the currently mushrooming trends of xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe alienate foreigners, especially Muslims, regardless of their actual citizenships.

Citizenship is not a religiously relevant concept. Religious solidarity is a borderless notion. Barnett and Stein describe the difference between the duty, which is provided everyday by parents, citizens, or government while crossing boarders turn it to humanitarianism. (Michael Barnett and Janice Grass Stein: 12-13). This case in Islam is not limited to borders, but to the brotherhood of faith. Interestingly, while humanitarian relief perspective provides, what is known as a comprehensive perspective to deal with refugees, regardless of their religion, its commitments to international boarders divide them into different categories with various legal rights. Contrarily, religious commitments for showing solidarity applies to all with shared faiths. This might explain successful fund-raising campaigns based on religious incentives regardless of their homeland.

Thus, the dichotomy between religious obligations and legal rights and responsibilities of citizens impacts Muslim communities and organisations in Europe. Muslim NGOs carefully work to bridge any potential gap between their religious obligations, including the fulfilment of donors' expectations in this regard, and their legal commitments as organisations of European citizens. They face the challenges of the growing trend of Islamophobia and the limitations of transnational networking as potential suspects of terrorism, although there is a considerable improvement in developing a dialogue with European publics.

On Muslim refugees, a possible conflict emerges between the obligation of showing solidarity and the legal restrictions of citizenship. Consider the cases of Bosnian and Syrian refugees in European countries. Manal Omar argues that the Syrian crisis might be an opportunity for European countries to reshape their immigration policies, and European countries should recall their generosity in welcoming refugees from Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s in respect of the principle of Non-Refoulment (Omar: 33-34). However, Muslim NGOs, while expected to show solidarity with Syrian and Bosnian refugees, must abide by the laws of their countries which discriminates between European Bosnian and Middle Eastern Syrian refugees.

Thijl Sunier considers clarifying three concepts as a necessity for an understanding of the social integration of young people in Europe. One concept is the popular culture. He argues that practices of religion are public acts that can be assimilated into the common culture. The second concept is the public sphere in which Muslims' public actions can arguably contribute to the change of. Finally, Sunier investigates European Muslim communities and NGOs' identity politics. Given the attitude of Islamophobia widespread in Europe, these Muslims wish their actions to contribute to changing stereotypes and limitations in the public sphere. But they also consider new manifestations of Islamic solidarity adaptable to their European citizenship. New understandings and applications are granted in Islamic jurisprudence (Sunier: 129-132).

After the 9/11 events, a new image was developed in that the culture of Muslim immigrants is a sort of discomfort and fear, which led to a gap between immigrants and the rest of the society (Ghorashi: 209), perhaps including their fellow European Muslims. Hallah Ghorashi argues that distinguishing between immigrants' culture and Western culture is based on a static view of the concept of culture, which might be more dynamic. She stresses that Europe lacks a collective notion of citizenship that allows a space for interaction between differences among various backgrounds (Ghorashi: 212). Shaming the immigrants' culture reflects Islamophobia more than any expression of actual defaults in the coming culture.

David Thurfjell argues that the humiliation that Muslims feel might lead them to incline to adjust to the majority's culture. Negative stereotypes leave Muslims with a paradox as they must choose between two extremes: whether to abandon Islam and silently hear the majority's condemnation of it or to alien themselves from the majority's culture and get integrated into a Muslim minority group which might be labelled radical or extremist (Thurfjell: 141-143). A vicious cycle of extremism and social hostility expresses the difficulties facing European Muslims, regardless of their enjoying full legal rights as citizens.

3. Muslim Communal Organisations in Turkey and the UK: Socioeconomic and Political Bases

The relationships between citizens and refugees are shaped significantly by social, economic and political circumstances. Thus, they require a clear understanding of realities surrounding Muslim communities in the studied countries, Turkey and the UK. Michael Barnett and Janice Grass Stein's argues that the process of secularization and sanctification is socially constructed,[6] and stress that the different interpretations of religion depend on changes of times and historical circumstances, and impact humanitarian relief and the related debate on

[6] Secularization of humanitarianism means the process by which elements of everyday and the profane insinuate themselves and become integrated into humanitarianism, thus challenging its sacred standing. This is evident in the growing role of states and commercial enterprises. Sanctification of humanitarianism means creation of the sacred, establishment and protection of a space that is viewed as pure and separate from the profane. This seems in the insistence on a space free of politics, and in the calling of a humanitarian ethics (Barnett and Stein: 8).

the desirable and the allowable (Barnett and Stein: 10). Although Islamic obligations are based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, their interpretations and implementations vary and should be constructed on recognized benefits and harms in the surrounding contexts.

This section reviews these realities to clarify different institutional and strategic paths taken by Muslim communities toward refugees. Specifically, it discusses three main realities: historical backgrounds, secularization in Turkey and Britain, and the war on terrorism.

3.1 Historical Backgrounds: Conflicting Empires

Historical backgrounds fundamentally contribute to constructing social and political realities. Neo-institutionalists, for example, argue that the establishment of societal organisations is shaped by its history, which explains why certain paths are taken instead of others. Muslim NGOs are not an exception in this regard. Their societies' historical backgrounds influence their perceptions about priorities of religious obligations, cultural sensitivities, and consequently possible programs. Hence, the old Turkish and British empires considerably influence the realities of Muslim NGOs. This history works on two levels: constructing cultural perceptions of others and consequently the possibility of social integration of newly arriving refugees.

3.1.1 History and Cultural Perception of "Others"

Cultural perceptions are historically constructed to define the self and the others. Although these perceptions do not define who acquires citizenship in a country, they determine the possibilities of social integration of citizens. Ideally, citizens should be categorized as *us*, and non-citizens as *others*. Regarding the cases studied here, the historical background of Turkey as the heir of the Ottoman Empire, and British colonialism in Arab countries shape Turkish and British perceptions of *us* versus *others*.

For many centuries, the Ottoman Empire was the Caliphate recognized by most Muslims in the world. As such, it was responsible for protecting the Muslim *Ummah* (worldwide nation) from foreign enemies. Ottoman subjects used to move freely within the Empire, including minor Asia, most Arab countries, and the Balkan. However, Western colonialism in Ottoman territories, especially the Arab provinces, was a sign of Ottoman decline. Since the collapse of the Ottoman empire in 1924, Muslim unity was not materialized in a similar entity.

The historical role of the Ottoman Empire can hardly be ignored in the Arab countries. With the failure of Arab nationalism to fulfil its promise of Arab unity, many Arabs, especially Islamists, call for the unity of Muslim *Ummah*, though not necessarily in the image of the Ottoman Empire. During the last decade, the relations between Arab countries and Turkey have witnessed a significant improvement, along with the revival of Islamic identities on both sides. Since the early 1990s, Tukey has experienced a growing trend to enhancing its Islamic identity in foreign

affairs. For example, Necmettin Erbakan, the former Turkish Prime Minister (1996-1997) and leader of the Welfare Party, called for establishing the first pan-Muslim economic organisation. This trend was strongly encouraged after the Justice and Development Party assumed power in 2002.

Turkish move toward the Muslim *Ummah* is accompanied with a reorientation of societal identity. According to Hüsrev Tabak, "the conceptual map of the Turkish people regarding their geography, history and present-day exigencies and outward responsibilities has been reconstructed" (Tabak: 197). This is due to three factors: the consciousness of a global Muslim community (*Ummah*) among the religious elite, the space that the ruling Justice and Development Party opened for de-securitizing religious activism and promoting international humanitarian engagement, the political roles of the Justice and Development Party in global Muslim politics based on Turkey's civilizational responsibilities (Tabak: 199).

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who ruled as Prime Minister (2003-2014) and the President since 2014, refers frequently to the Ottoman Empire. He was once known for his efforts to reviving a "New Ottomanism" – a sense of belonging among Muslims from different countries, based on not only their religious commitments but also historical backgrounds. This led the country to receive and welcome refugees from various neighbours, including Iraq, Bulgaria, and Syria. Oppressed Muslim minorities from Myanmar or Eastern Turkistan (or Xinjiang) in China can now find a safe shelter in Tukey (Yaylaci and Karakuş: 238; Haşimi: 131-133). Thus, the Turkish definition of "us" at this moment is relatively more comprehensive and more *Islamic*. This helps the Turkish society to show solidarity with other Muslims easily and deeply.

Additionally, official humanitarian assistance has become a defining feature of Turkey's international aid activities. It increased significantly to reach one billion dollars in 2012. This increase made Turkey the world's fourth largest donor in humanitarian assistance (Haşimi: 135-137). In 2012, the fifth annual conference of Turkish ambassadors was titled "humanitarian diplomacy", which is the same name of the mediation program of Turkey's Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH). Ahmet Davutoğlu, then the Foreign Minister who later became Prime Minster, addressed the conference to elaborate on the three orientations of Turkey's foreign policy: toward citizens of Turkey abroad, toward crisis zones regardless of geographical proximity, and toward the structure of global order. This diplomacy allowed Turkey to construct new creative forms of diplomatic models and humanitarian vision (Haşimi: 1401-141). In addition, Turkey passed a law to offer citizenship for people from Turkish descents, which benefited Bulgarian refugees in 1990s. These policies encouraged Islamic NGOs to enhance their humanitarian role and move beyond traditional concepts of relief to new activities. This expanded the horizons of showing solidarity with refugees.

In the other case of the United Kingdom, colonialism was a significant millstone in British as well as Muslim histories. Simultaneously with the Ottoman decline, the British occupied several Arab countries and continued to rule them until well after World War II. Arabs also blame the British for the Balfour Declaration in 1917 in which the British government promised the Jews to establish a national homeland for them in Palestine.

Although the Muslim perception of the UK has gradually improved with educational and business opportunities there, Muslims hardly view it as part of “us”. It is still perceived as a foreign, Western and Christian-majority country, far from home, and with a hostile colonist past. A considerable segment of the British has similarly negative attitudes towards Muslims. Accepting them as a racial minority does not remove such historical and cultural barriers. According to Kazmi, right-wing parties continue to call foreigners and Muslims to acquire “British values” to get assimilated into the British society (Kazmi, 2016).

In the debate over Brexit, the possibility of Turkey joining the EU was a heated issue, as the Turks became symbols of Europe’s foreign “other”. The media campaign for Brexit stressed the fear of Turkey joining the EU and thus sending millions of Muslim migrants to the UK. This enticed Prime Minister Cameron to talk about Turkey joining the EU in year 3000 (Kazmi, 2016).

In short, Muslims who share the same Islamic faith are obligated to show solidarity towards each other, and this sharing is practically about defining the religious identities of us and others, as well as their historical backgrounds. While Turkey expands the definition of its identity to embrace the Islamic world, the UK restricts its identity into a vague Britishness, which implicitly alienate Muslims. such national trends in both countries impact the potentials and limits of their Muslim citizens to deal with the refugees considering Islamic solidarity.

3.1.2 History and the Possibility of Social Integration of Refugees

Since assuming the power, the Justice and Development Party have pursued to improve the Turkish relations with other Muslim countries around the world. Initiated by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (2014-2016), the civilizational perspective of its foreign policy aimed at a zero-problem relationship. This strategy surely faced numerous obstacles due to the complexity of regional politics, especially following the Arab Spring, but enhanced the civilizational approach within the Turkish society. Thus, it is no wonder that Muslim refugees are appreciated, although they have little chances to become citizens unless they descend from Turkish origins.

Refugees in Turkey live in cities or one of the twenty-five camps or more established to shelter them. The common culture seems to partially facilitate their smooth integration in terms of the social and communal activities. However, Koca argues that “despite the “open door” policy and

humanitarian discourse of the government, Syrian refugees have been integrated into a security framework of control and containment" (Koca: 55). Practically, apparent welcoming policies and practices could not overcome framing and administrate them as a "threat" to the domestic market and the employment opportunities for Turkish workers (Koca: 55-75); (Kiris¸ci: 80-82). Syrian refugees were also portrayed as a "destabilizing" factor due to stereotypes linking them to criminality and terrorism (Koca: 55-75).

More critically, Gümüş and Eroğlu accuse the Justice and Development Party of having an ideological-sectarian approach toward Syrian refugees. While acknowledging a partial integration of the Syrian refugees into Turkish society, Gümüş and Eroğlu observe several cases of exploitation against Sunni Syrians. The situation is even worse for the non-Syrian and non-Sunni refugees, like Kurds and Alevis (Gümüş & Eroğlu: 482). Although Syrian refugees might enjoy a significant potential for social integration in Turkey due to the shared culture, they still experience policies and practices of control, containment or discrimination.

For the case of the UK, Syrian refugees struggle with two challenges. On one side, there is an increasing trend of xenophobia and Islamophobia, coupled with revived right-wing parties. Cultural differences, hostile environments, and lack of shared perceptions, all left the refugees virtually lost. The UK witnesses a significant presence of right-wing nationalism. It revives the so called "Britishness" and pushes to get integrated into the local political discourse. Frequent talking about "fundamental British values" easily targets minorities, mainly Muslims, and foreigners, even citizens of other European countries (Kazmi, 2016). Simultaneously, solidarity movements and some churches frequently protest to welcome refugees and support their right to grantee safe shelters in the UK. However, as the Brexit case, while the British public opinion is disputed, official policies tend to be more conservative. Influenced by the war on terrorism, Islamophobia has gradually been discussed as a daily life issue, especially as far as the possibility of social integration is concerned (Kazmi, 2016).

Zaheer Kazmi argues that by the Brexit voting time, the "Muslim question" was a debatable issue. This left British Muslims uncomfortable and feeling targeted (Kazmi, 2016), and makes it difficult for British Muslims to show solidarity toward Muslim refugees beyond the limited societal expectations. For instance, Muslims can now hardly pressure local or national governments to support the Syrian refugees intensively or increase their numbers.

The other challenge facing Muslim refugees in the UK is British Muslims themselves. According to Serena Hussain, most British Muslims came from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, and left these countries in the early 1950s, immediately after they gained independence from the UK, which was then in need for workers. Later in the 1970s, these immigrants brought their families, and thus their number increased. Since the 1990s, Muslims from the Middle East, which was

also mostly under British colonialism, has become increasingly visible in the UK. Some of them went there as educated professionals, while others arrived firstly as refugees, but all fled the region due to economic or political hardship (Hussain: 24-27).

Hussain's study clarifies that Muslims live as one of the minorities in the UK, like Hindus, Sikh, etc. Moreover, Muslims are separated into smaller sub-minorities based on national origins or religious sects (Hussain: 36-37). Each sub-minority enjoys an influence in certain places and has its own mosque. Hussain stresses that Muslims in the UK has the youngest demographic profile in the country and the lowest ratio of elders (Hussain: 42). Recent statistics of the British Foreign Ministry shows Islam as the second largest religion there, with 2.7 million. Muslims constitute 4.7% of the total population, with only 7% Arabs, and 47% born in the UK.

Some studies trace the tensions and marginalization faced by the Muslim refugees to their relations with British Muslims, most of which are Asian or Middle Easterners who arrived recently in seeking asylum or refuge. Some observers think that language differences are an important factor (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh: 304). Local Muslims might be afraid that the new comers will only add to the already mushrooming Islamophobia due to their unknown ideologies or economic severe hardship. Therefore, British Muslim donors might prefer, if not pushed, to support the needy, including refugees, in their homelands or other hosting countries. Although social integration is possible in the UK, due to freedom of speech and religion, it is not always guaranteed for reasons pertaining to the British themselves, whether Muslims or non-Muslims.

3.2 Secularization

Both Turkey and the UK define themselves as secular states. Despite the close relations between the English church and Monarchy, the UK separates politics from religion. Turkey also adopted secularism since the end of Ottoman Sultanate in 1923. However, the secularization process in each of them should be carefully examined to investigate the environments surrounding Muslim refugees.

Charles Taylor distinguishes between two different belief conditions: societies where belief in God is dominant, and societies where reasoning unrelated to God is expected in most contexts (Harding: 342). Despite decades of secularization, Turkey is easily classified in the first category. Most Turkish people are Muslims believing in God, regardless of their rituals commitments. This enhances the possibility of religious solidarity acceptance and showing and encourages the good reception of refugees, especially those who share the same religion.

Since the 1980s, religion has had an increasingly public role in Turkey, first in societal institutions, then in politics. Gradual presence of Islamic practices in public is in harmony with the civilizational perspective of Turkey's foreign policy, and both are strongly impacted by the

Justice and Development Party in power. Although the country still follows a secular path[7], the significant presence of Islamic vocabulary, rituals, and attitudes is easily found in society[8]. In this milieu, the Islamic organisations, mainly humanitarian and educational, are very active. Tabak stresses that the nongovernmental sector in Turkey is characterized by the religious orientation of the humanitarian relief organisations, which add to the frequent recall of the Ottoman history (Tabak: 195). This Islamic root and presence are interestingly the main obstacles that Turkey faces in its struggle to join the European Union.

Usually, a transit country, Turkey frequently receives an influx of refugees (Kolukirik and Aygül: 70-72). However, while the Turkish people might encounter some tensions with refugees due to economic competitiveness, Kolukirik and Aygül's' interviews with some Turkish individuals show that the latter still consider the refugees as good Muslims because they are religious (Kolukirik and Aygül: 79). Turkish business groups and unions do not call for stopping the refugees; they only call upon the government to formalize the informal arrangements related to the work of refugees in order for the latter to pay taxes and get protected from exploitation (Omar: 17). Though, categorizing refugees based on their religion could jeopardize some of them, namely Christian or Alevis.

One the other hand, the British society belongs to Taylor's other category, namely, a society of reasoning unrelated to God. Khaled Mansour and Heba Raouf Ezzat argue that the increasing number and significance of Muslim minorities in the West encourage the developing of a new *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) of minorities that focuses on the ultimate goals of Islam (instead of literal application of sacred texts), and considers the realities of a secular culture and privatized sacred values, rituals and rules (Mansour and Ezzat: 142). That new *Fiqh*, however, should also critically question the assimilation of these conditions in the Islamic belief. In the context of Islamic humanitarian organisations, Michael Barnett and Stein demonstrate that UK-based Islamic Relief uses secularization as a strategy to overcome moral suspicions in society (Barnett and Stein: 24). This mixture of secularization and Islamic obligations shows a low level of religious solidarity in a socially appropriate method.

Stable secularity in the UK can be traced in the last two decades, with a significantly low rate of church attendance (Zehavi: 339). Gradually since 1992, the Church of England, along with religious minorities, has been involved in activities of social responsibilities, notably the provision of social services. This was officially approved by Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997-2007) (Zehavi: 343-345). This simulated a growing trend in religious tendencies and enhanced Christian religiosity in the British society. Unfortunately, this was accompanied by an increasing

[7] In his speech at Cairo University in November 2012, President Erdogan advised Egyptians to adopt the Turkish secular model.
[8] Turkish secularists bitterly criticize the JDP government of being conservative, with strong religious tones and imposing a kind of polity over secular minority (Sirkeci: 138-139).

xenophobia. Populist cultures with Christian touches are increasing in several European countries. Even before the Syrian crisis hit Europe, the Austrian Vice Chancellor, in 2013 recommended receiving Syrian refugees, mainly children, women, and *Christians*. Similar statements from European politicians show their perceptions of a "Christian" Europe and the possibility that the Syrian refugees would endanger this identity (Hafiz: 19-22). Accordingly, Muslim citizens in European countries themselves are at risk due to the increasing number of discriminative laws and social behaviour. This risks the "tolerant" secular values of the British society. Indeed, despite announced secular polices, the belonging to a different belief is now consequential affects considerably actions toward refugees who are mostly Muslim. Ironically, while Turkey tends to favour Syrian refugees, as mostly Sunni Muslims, the UK takes step toward closeness for the new comers due to the same classification.

Based on the number of received refugees, while Turkey implements an open-door policy toward Syrian refugees, the EU, especially the UK, has a semi open-window approach. Turkey opened its doors to civilians as well as militant opposition groups, mainly the Syrian Free Army (Oktav and Celikaksoy: 412-413; Ihlamur-Oner: 208). While on the other side, Moghissi stresses that the immigration and settlement policies in most European countries are driven mainly by security concerns, and focus on how to watch, contain and control Muslims to protect society from cultural contamination (Moghissi: 2). Compared to Germany and Sweden, the UK and the US tend to receive less refugees, while preferring humanitarian assistance (Ostrand: 272).

The contradictions between these two policies and the Turkish long desire to join the EU encouraged the singing of the Turkish-European agreement in 2016, which is inconsistent with human rights rules, and especially European standards (Mătușescu: 100-101). For Turkey, it could be considered as a sort of benefiting from the refugees' issue, while fulfilling its ambitious dream of joining the EU, as the agreement would have immediate advantages for its citizens. For the EU, the agreement ensured a limited influx of mostly Muslim refugees[9]. Thus, the agreement is implemented by both sides, though only partially. For example, Kemal Kirişci shows the gap between the number of Syrian refugees that the EU is obliged by the agreement to relocate in Europe and the real number of relocated Syrian refugees (Kirisci: 82-83). This shows the agreement's limited potential for success, and the EU efforts to limit the number of relocated Syrian refugees in Europe, perhaps because their potential integration is doubtful.

[9] For details on the difficulties of implementing the Turkish-European agreement regarding Syrian refugees, see: Shawqi, Ahmed. (2016): Syrian Refugees: Political and Humanitarian Dimensions. *Issues and Visions*. 1(2). pp. 20-29 (In Arabic).

3.3 War on Terror

Due to domestic political concerns and pressure from the US, some Arab governments, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia, treated as terrorists its citizens who participated in the Afghani or Bosnian wars during the 1980s and 1990s. The 9/11 events were a turning point in this regard, as the so-called war on terror turned global. Lacking an agreed-upon definition of terrorism, the US waged a war that targeted mainly Muslim countries and organisations. It treated the activities of these organisations and suspicious and imposed restrictions on the movement of their staff and money. Military campaigns targeted Afghanistan and Iraq, with little transparency or accountability. Then, al-Qaida attacked Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, and a decade later, the Islamic State of Iraq and Levitant (ISIL) attacked France, Belgium, and the UK.

Consequently, Europeans and Americans developed negative attitudes toward Muslims, especially Middle Easterners. While American President Donald Trump frequently linked terrorism to Islam, Europe witnessed mushrooming trends of Islamophobia, with an increasing number of hate crimes. The situation was further complicated by the influx of refugees, mostly Syrian, in the last few years.

From an early stage of this war on terror, Islamic humanitarian organisations were linked to terrorism. They suffered from tough restrictions apparently aiming at preventing any potential funding of terrorist activities, although earlier in the 1980s, during the Afghani war, militants, preachers, and humanitarian workers had close relations blessed by regional and global powers. In the first stage of the war on terror, humanitarian works were obviously acknowledged, while preaching was denounced and militancy criminalized. Later, however, most activities of Islamic humanitarian organisations were criticized.

Nevertheless, other cases of close relationships between humanitarian relief and militant activities are not equally criticized. Pérouse de Montclos argues that humanitarian aid is frequently used as a tool to support militant activities or win the hearts and minds of people, especially under colonialism (Pérouse de Montclos: 235). Examples include the activities of Catholic priests in Ireland before 1920, and Christian clergy during Nigeria's civil war (1967-1970). These movements considered "charity as implying that the giver has control over the recipient", and that "solidarity means showing respect for the partners' integrity and their right to set their own conditions" (Pérouse de Montclos: 238; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 155). These cases express a perception of solidarity that is more radical and fundamental in terms of reconstructing the disadvantaged realities, in spite of only providing temporary humanitarian relief.

Despite continuous investigations of Islamic organisations, rare evidence was provided to support any claims of their relations with militants, while many of them were forced to stop their activities due to financial or political restrictions. Supporting Muslim refugees raises these claims again. Lucy Salek complains that Muslims organisations face a dilemma between the fear of accusations of links with militant groups and violations of counterterrorism legislations on one hand, and the revealing of their religious identity and taking the advantage of the religiously-based trust of local and international Muslim communities on the other hand (Salek (2015): 362).

Recent attacks in the UK, though done by British, enhanced Islamophobia in the society, and the stereotype of Middle Eastern *terrorist* Muslims - an image that can easily apply to Syrian refugees. Thus, while British Muslims are urged to show solidarity with their oppressed Muslim brothers and sisters, they should overcome negative stereotyping as terrorists or connected to them. Besides, Islamic organisations must abide by a growing number of restrictive regulations addressing terrorism but targeting Muslims specifically.

Since the 1990s, UK-based Islamic Relief, a leading humanitarian organisation mostly working in Muslim countries and inspired by Islamic values, had to exert great efforts to disprove terrorist accusations. One of its tactics was to align its discourse with the international humanitarian standards and terms; another was to strictly eliminate any elements of proselytization, let alone militancy, from its humanitarian relief activities. These tactics seem so far successful. They are based on showing solidarity in an appropriate form as a Western-based organisation with Islamic values.

Turkey is different because its war on terror targets mainly the Kurdish rebels of the PKK, although it was hit several times by ISIL. The common perception of terrorism there is unconnected to Islam or Muslims because all involved parties are Muslim. The Turkish government and the public opinion in general deal with ISIL as one party in the Syrian war that is against Turkey. Islam is hardly referred to in such political and militant disputes. ISIL is not considered in Turkey as a true *Islamic state*; instead, its ideology and deeds are denounced as corrupted for political goals. It is ironic, however, that the Turkish government was accused of supporting Islamic militants in Syria other than ISIL.

Therefore, Turkish Islamic humanitarian organisations enjoy considerable support in relieving the huge number of refugees fleeing daily from Syria into Turkey. Accusations of *Islamic* terrorism are easily falsified, or at least ignored, in such an encouraging environment of showing Islamic solidarity. Turkish humanitarian organisations can apparently negotiate more space for dealing with refugees without the fear or sensitivity of their counterparts in Britain. Additionally, the Turkish government is intensively involved in the Syrian war, taking militant

and humanitarian actions. Contrarily, the British government has been hesitant to go beyond financial support in this crisis; for instance, to receive more refugees, not to mention involved in a humanitarian intervention against the oppressive Syrian regime[10]. Turkey received three million refugees compared to the UK which negotiated the admission of 20,000 refugees only (BBC News, 2016).

4. Turkish and British Islamic Organisations: Strategies and Outcomes

Official responses notwithstanding, humanitarian organisations are usually the most respondents to refugee issues. Based on the Islamic solidarity concept, Islamic humanitarian organisations are motivated largely to show solidarity with refugees. This section discusses the strategies that major Turkish and British Islamic humanitarian organisations follow in their dealing with refugee issues, especially Syrian refugees. It also discusses the outcomes of these strategies as implemented in certain programs. I assess these strategies and outcomes considering the Islamic solidarity concept.

4.1 Refugees and Islamic Humanitarian Organisations

Civil society organisations usually deal with refugee issues as a part of their societal missions. Hein and Niazi note that most initiatives to welcome Syrian refugees in the UK, US and Iceland came mainly from civil society organisations, not governments (Hein and Niazi: 727). The mission of humanitarian relief organisations is comprehensive, covering the societal needs of the refugees in the receiving countries. I focus here on the Islamic humanitarian relief organisations to test my argument that Muslims' commitment to showing solidarity with each other might be constructed upon different interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence. Consequently, this implies various implementations, considering the social and political contexts. Thus, I investigate humanitarian relief strategies, programs, and outcomes in the light of Islamic solidarity in Turkey and the UK.

UNHCR statistics of April 2017 shows that Turkey hosts about 3 million Syrians, which makes it the world's first host of refugees. Lebanon comes second with one million refugees. The funds needed to support the refugees in Turkey is estimated at $890 million, with a current gap of $767 million (Syria Regional Refugee Response, April 2017). As Europe's largest recipient of Syrian refugees, Germany has received only 600 thousand, making the total number of refugees of all nationalities to one million (Beauchamp, 2017).

Turkey does not grant a refugee status to asylum-seekers who come from outside Europe, as its recorded reservation on the Geneva Refugee Convention shows. Instead, In October 2011, the Turkish government announced an open-door policy toward Syrian refugees, offering them

[10] The fighting British troops in Syria is a part of the anti - Islamic State of Iraq and Levitant (ISIL) forces.

a “temporary protection regime” as a legal framework. This regime grants few legal rights to refugees (Yaylaci and Karakuş: 239).

Relevantly, the Turkish government is criticized for lacking a consistent stance toward Syrian refugees. Its policies and practices are mostly shaped by domestic and foreign policy concerns. While dominated by normative incentives in receiving more than three million refugees, the governmental policies toward them are still hesitant. The government addresses refugees in its social, security and economic policies. Parallel, it also utilizes their presence in its foreign policy; in enhancing its international role and image as well improving its relationship with the EU (Memisoglu & Ilgit: 332). This fragile balance might offer Syrian refugees safe shelters and several economic and social advantages but cannot grantee them a permanent settlement.

The UN and European governments have not set specific arrangements to adjust the international status of a refugee to allow him or her to seek asylum in a third country. Thus, the Turkish authorities do not grant international organisations access to the camps of Syrian refugees (Ihlamur-Oner: 194). Consequently, the Turkish government has had to depend intensively on local civil society organisations, in addition to the Turkish Red Crescent. Paker argues that it is common for humanitarian organisations to work closely with their governments, both directly like the Red Cross/Crescent and indirectly like the civil society organisations that share the same mission with the government (Paker: 647-660).

Turkish Islamic humanitarian organisations, which flourished after the Balkan war in the 1990s, specially the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH),[11] have played significant roles in supporting Syrian refugees. But the increasing number of Syrian refugees put pressures on the government to allow Syrians to establish their own humanitarian relief organisations in Turkey and accommodate the refugees in the Turkish educational system (Omar: 22).

The Balkan war was also a turning point for British Islamic organisations. Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan establish that this war triggered initiatives of competitive campaigns by Muslim minorities in the West. It was a head step in developing Islamic charities, notably UK-based Islamic Relief, which is recognized by British authorities, especially as it does not engage in any sort of militancy or proselytization (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 133-134).

For a long time, British Muslims preferred to send money back home because they find poverty in the UK, which provides citizens with social services, incomparable to poverty in their countries of origin (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 11). Hence, their donation to Islamic charities for the sake of specific cases was indeed a major change. Many of them, however, still prefer

[11] The Head of the IHH frequently acknowledges his fruitful relationship with Necmettin Erbakan, the former Turkish Prime Minister (1996-1997), who was pressured by the Army to step down for violating the constitutional separation between religion and politics.

to support Muslim refugees abroad, not locally, because refugees in the UK receive financial support from the government.

Unlike Turkey, the rise of Islamic humanitarian relief organisations initiated debates in the UK. Per Salek, some opponents argue that the religious identity of these organisations jeopardizes their neutrality in humanitarian actions, and humanitarianism might well compete with, if not contradict religious obligations. Others suggest that religions are conservative, produce partisan alliances and create conflicts (Salek, 2015: 346). On the other hand, Salek finds harmony between Islamic principles and humanitarian relief (Salek, 2015: 352-357). Facing this wind, Islamic organisations had to downplay their religious identity and accept secular narratives, so they can receive fund from major donors (Salek (2015): 348).

Nevertheless, there is a subtle difference between the two concepts of humanitarian relief and Islamic solidarity: while the latter assumes the multiplicity of levels of solidarity, the former is concerned with and strictly limited to only one level. Although flexible mechanisms of Islamic Jurisprudence allow various interpretations and implementations of showing the solidarity, it is still acknowledged maximizing supportive efforts and denouncing restricting them to certain areas.

This, in fact, is the difference between the Turkish IHH and the UK-based Islamic Relief. While the latter reacts to misperceptions by toning down its religious base and calling itself an *Islamic-Inspired* foundation, the former highlights its religious identity and promotes its rise in Turkey. The Islamic Relief struggles to balance between the expectations of its Muslim donors who like to show solidarity with other Muslims on the one hand, and the undermining of its religious identity to adhere only to humanitarian principles (Salek (2015): 359). This explains the strategic use of Islamic slogans by Islamic Relief while following the humanitarian agendas. This integrates secular humanitarian principles with Islamic solidarity as an Islamic Relief strategy to maximize its humanitarian benefits.

In the next subsection, I will study Islamic Relief and IHH strategies for supporting refugees, based on their programs implementation, which will be examined by three criteria: the selection of services provided, the integration of religious elements in service delivery, and the voluntary versus mandatory participation in specific religious activities (Bielefeld and Cleveland: 446-447). Program implementation, along with organisational control, expression of religion, is major assessment categories and elements of the definition of a Faith Based Organisation.

4.2 Islamic Relief and The Foundation for Humanitarian Relief (IHH)

Islamic Relief was established by Egyptian immigrants in Birmingham in 1984, who were moved by the famine in the African Horn. Its activities combine humanitarian relief and developmental actions. It enjoys international recognition and trust due to its efficiency

professionalism, moderate Islamic orientation, and alignment with the international developmental agenda. Its guiding Islamic humanitarian values are also in step with the international developmental discourse (Petersen: 145-146; Abuarqub: 7).

The IHH was started in 1992 by a handful volunteers who participated in humanitarian works during the Bosnian war. Their work led to its official establishment in 1995 as the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief by Fehmi Bülent Yıldırım and Mahmut Savaş. It seeks to improve the basic human rights of all needy and oppressed people, prevent violations of their rights and freedom, observe unchanging values in a changing world, and let the good will rule everywhere. The IHH acts in the fields of humanitarian relief and diplomacy, human rights, emergency aid, voluntary works, and raising awareness (https://www.ihh.org.tr/en).

Hüsrev Tabak shows that the IHH delivers humanitarian aid to about 140 countries around the world, acts as a mediator in disputes and intra-state conflicts, namely in Pakistan, Syria, the Philippines, and as a facilitating platform for discussions to settle the Kurdish grievances (Tabak: 193-194). The organisation calls this activity a humanitarian diplomacy. Since its inception in 1992 until early 2015, the IHH contributed to releasing more than 2,230 persons of nine nationalities (Humanitarian Relief Foundation, 2015: 18).

4.2.1 Service Selection

The designed programs and provided services reflect the humanitarian approach and available choices for an organisation. The humanitarian approaches of Islamic Relief and the IHH are shaped considerably by the levels of secularization and scarification in their societies, more than expanding the concept of Islamic solidarity to its limits. Both organisations benefit from flexible Islamic Jurisprudence to determine the variety of offered programs, their inspiring values, targeted beneficiaries such as refugees, in serving locations, as discussed below.

4.2.1.1 Controlling Values

Influenced by their societies, both Islamic Relief and the IHH maintain two levels of controlling values and work ethics: one proclaimed and the other implicit. While Islamic Relief sees itself as an Islamic-inspired humanitarian organisation, the IHH claims to be a human rights defender and a humanitarian relief organisation. It makes no reference to Islamic values because of the strictly secular laws in Turkey. Both organisations use the Islamic rituals of *Zakat* (annual obligatory charity) and *Sadaqat* (optional charity) to fundraise for their activities and provide services to the needy regardless of their religion, race, gender, sect, or language.

Implicit values of Islamic Relief include professionality and transparency. Barnett and Stein argue that secularization is about rationalization, bureaucratization, and professionalization of humanitarian relief. This might threaten the religious obligations when undermined by

calculations of personal/institutional costs and benefits instead of being based on piety (Barnett and Stein: 24). They give Islamic Relief as an example of strategic secularization to reassure continuity, given the suspicions in its environment (Barnett and Stein: 24)[12]. Lucy Salek contends that Islamic Relief follows *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (the ultimate goals of Islamic jurisprudence) to calculate the benefits and harms (Salek, 2015: 364-368).

This professionality prevented Islamic Relief from taking a political stand in the Syrian revolution, except for using the general description of "Arab Spring" to refer to the various political changes in the Arab states. The organisation described the Syrian case in its annual reports as a conflict, then as a crisis (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2012). These vague descriptions were used even before later claims about Islamic militancy there.

Islamic Relief published *"Working in Conflict: A Faith Based Toolkit for Islamic Relief"* to clarify issues related to its works in sensitive places and issues. According to this publication, Islamic Relief stands with the international humanitarian principals of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence (Salek, 2014: 26). This is consistent with secular humanitarian relief and clearly shows a limited understanding of Islamic solidarity. Inspired by *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (the ultimate goals of Islamic Jurisprudence), Islamic Relief calls for transforming any conflict into a dialogue or peaceful interaction (Salek, 2014: 38). The report highlights the organisation's high sensitivity to getting involved in the politicization of any conflict (Salek, 2014: 159-162). No justification was mentioned; only that it limits its activities strictly to humanitarian relief as the appropriate showing solidarity, based on its readings of Islamic goals.

The IHH seems to apply a proactive approach more than using a professionality rhetoric. Despite lacking clear Islamic logos, it exemplifies Islamic values in siding with and magnifying the voice of the oppressed and thus helping the creation of a more just world. It is about changing, more than aligning with, the current humanitarian system. Thus, its annual reports on its activities in Syria (2012-2014) not only review the background of the crisis but also side with the revolution (Humanitarian Relief Foundation, 2014). This shows the organisation's political stand.

4.2.1.2 Targeted Beneficiaries in Served Locations

The programmes of Islamic Relief and the IHH mainly target Syrian refugees now a majority of all refugees. As an Islamic-inspired organisation addressing the needs of refugees who are mostly Muslim, Islamic Relief issued a report in 2014 explaining the rights of forced refugees in Islam, which are not only rooted in Islamic values but also addressing modern challenges (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2014: The Rights of Forced migrants in Islam: 4). The report is a

[12] An example of the strategic use of the issue of Syrian refugees in Turkey is its newspapers coverage which tends to reproduce the competing ideological and political stands more than emphasizing the humanitarian aspect (Yaylaci and Karakuş: 248).

theoretical discussion of the rights of refugees and asylum-seeks and focuses on the obligations of Muslim countries and their need of a framework for receiving refugees and regulating their rights and duties. However, it ignores the case of receiving refugees in non-Muslim countries, despite its relevance to the organisation's context.

Both Islamic Relief and the IHH have been pushed by certain political and societal conditions to show solidarity in specific locations: while Islamic Relief works dominantly away from home, the IHH runs its programs at home or close to it. In the UK, although the government allocated about 2.5 billion pounds for the refugees between 2012 and 2016, only 20 thousand refugees are permitted to stay in the country as such for five years before they can apply to settle down there (BBC News, 2016). Most funds, however, are assigned to support registering Syrian refugees and providing them with basic humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter and relief packages in other hosting countries, namely, Lebanon (337 million), Turkey (118 million), beside Iraq, Egypt and Jordon (Department for International Development and UK Aid, 2017).

Islamic Relief designed programmes in Lebanon, Jordon, Iraq, and Syrian territories. Working at home seemed less urgent, considering the limited number of refugees there and the financial support they receive from other local organisations. The organisation received funds from the British authorities and other European donors to support refugees in camps overseas, perhaps to avoid controversies in relation to the influx of refugees into Europe. In addition, the organisation supports the refugees to meet their urgent needs in Greece, Italy, Macedonia, and Germany.

From another perspective, Islamic Relief helps the refugees to stay in their country, because otherwise, by facilitating their fleeing, they would risk losing the ability to eventually return home. Similarly, during the Bosnian war, Muslim organisations had the priority of keeping Muslim Bosnians at home, against UN recommendations, because evacuating them would contribute to the Serbian policy of ethnic cleansing (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 140). However, for Bosnian Muslims who fled to European countries, both Islamic Relief and the Muslim Aid, the second largest organisation of its kind in the UK, supported the establishment of an Islamic centre to facilitate their settlement there (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan: 141).

To the contrary, the IHH works mainly in Turkey but also in Syrian regions. As the Turkish government prevents the international humanitarian organisations from accessing the refugee camps, the IHH struggles to meet the mushrooming needs in those camps. It runs four offices in the Turkish governorates close to Syria and four on the Turkish-Syrian borders that cover operations inside Syria. Interestingly, like the IHH, Islamic Relief works inside the Syrian territories controlled by the opposition groups, despite its declared neutrality.

Both organisations have to struggle to fulfil their humanitarian mission. Domestically, the IHH works under the pressure of an increasing number of fled refugees, alongside with a limited coordination between national and international humanitarian organisations and inadequate cooperation with the international organisations and the Turkish state (Memisoglu & Ilgit: 333). Intensive humanitarian efforts have not been enough to convince thousands of Syrian refugees risking their lives to reach a European country (Koca: 55-75).

Internationally, Islamic Relief seeks to compensate refugees British restricted policies that deter them from travelling to a safe country (Turner: 2015). Since 2012, the UK government has committed large amounts of humanitarian relief to Syrian refugees; being the second largest donor to the Syrian refugee crisis. However, it was hesitant to offer them resettlement. In 2015, the UK established the Syrian "Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme", which was separate from the existing UNHCR resettlement program, but was described as consistent with the latter (Blinder: 8-9). Ostrand considers this program as lacking the requirements of the 1951 Geneva Convention (Ostrand: 268).

British humanitarian organisations urged the Prime Minister to do more; to resettle at least 5% of the total Syrian refugee population by the end of 2015 (Smith & Gower & Bardens: 1). The assumed number was 10.000 persons; the offered number currently reaches 20.000 to be settled by 2020. They were firstly given "humanitarian protection" status, with permission to work and access public fund. In early 2017, it was announced that these refugees will be offered refugee status (McGuinness: 3). Despite the seemingly high number, the UK is still behind compared to other European countries in the resettlement of Syrian refugees (May: 2017); (Ostrand: 272). The UK's share of Europe's asylum declined from 11% in 2008 to 3% in both 2015 and 2016 (Blinder 9).

4.2.1.3 Variety of Programs

Islamic Relief and the IHH run various programs in a manner reflecting their controlling values, political and social realities, and their priorities and interpretations of solidarity.

In its strategic plan for 2011-2015, Islamic Relief aimed at providing an Islamic perspective on humanitarian and social justice issues, which had not been well articulated or understood, both globally and among the concerned Muslim communities (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2011: Global Strategy 2011-2015: 17).

Emphasizing religious values, Islamic Relief's annual report in 2011 elaborated on its response to the Arab Spring (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2011: Annual Report and Financial Statements: 12-13), describing the "disenfranchised communities mobilizing to create political change," as well as its role as providing "vital humanitarian assistance to people caught up in conflict and suffering as unemployment and inflation soared across the region". It focused on raising global

awareness of the on-going humanitarian needs (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2011: Annual Report and Financial Statements: 25). However, it neither took a clear political position nor suggested a support program rather than humanitarian relief.

Relevantly, Islamic Relief explained its response to the refugee crisis in Europe, estimating the number of refugees there in 2012 at 293,606. It launched a complimentary response programme called Mediterranean Refugee Crisis (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2014: Islamic Relief: Syria Emergency Response 2012-2014: 2). Part of it was to provide the refugees with food packs, hygiene kits and cultural mediation in Greece, Italy, Macedonia, and Germany (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2016: Syria Five Years Crisis: 1). Additional programmes included humanitarian aid to non-Syrians, like internally displaced Iraqis and Palestinian refugees in Syria and other hosting countries, mainly Lebanon, Jordon and, to a less extent, Turkey. It delivered more than $195 million worth of aid inside Syrian and other refugees-hosting countries and provided supplies to besieged regions in Syria and displaced people along Turkish borders. These supplies included medical assistance, food parcels and World Food Program vouchers, shelter and cash for rent, water and sanitation, as well as such essential items as heaters, clothing, cash to help the refugees meet their urgent basic needs, education support, psychological assistance, in addition to vital aid and food supplies for Palestinians trapped in the Yarmouk camp.

Islamic Relief continued its humanitarian efforts in 2013 to support those suffering in “the worst humanitarian crisis of our time”. It carried out programs in Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2013: 10). Domestically, it presented a report to the UK government with key suggestions to reduce the suffering of Syrians, but with no recommendations of specific actions. Besides, it issued a petition calling for international action to secure a better access to the country and initiated a campaign to protect Syrian children. The report also called for humanitarian corridors inside Syria. (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2013: 14; Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2015).

Islamic Relief was more active domestically in 2014, as it called on the British government to join the global programme for resettling the most vulnerable refugees (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2014: Annual Report and Financial Statements: 26), with no discussion of details or outcomes. In the same year, while the organisation celebrated its 30th anniversary, it acknowledged the 20th anniversary since it became the first ever Muslim NGO to receive funding from the British government (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2014: Annual Report and Financial Statements: 31).

Islamic Relief’s strategic plan 2017-2021 pessimistically described the increase of conflict and forced migration in the world but admitted its ability to access Muslim communities in war

zones. The report notes that the “increasing scale of forced migration has also affected many developed countries, with a growing need for a humanitarian response to inward refugee flows” (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2017: 3). This hints at its local humanitarian work, especially in the light of the rising Islamophobia.

The organisation suggests implicitly that the rapid political changes in the Middle East and North Africa resulted in a misunderstanding of how this region and the wider Muslim world will embrace political reform. This, in turn, produces a fear of immigrants and politicizes Islam, and confuses Islam with oppressive culture, violent extremism and terrorism; hence, the widespread fear of and aggression against Muslims. The solution, the report proposes, is to build alliances of mutual trust and understanding and to encourage a greater representation of Islamic perspectives to tackle ignorance (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2017: 3).

On the other hand, the IHH is involved in intensive Islamic programmes without describing them as such. It runs various activities including humanitarian relief and social aid such as digging wells, health care services and establishing orphanages, schools, cultural centres, and mosques. These activities may be considered a sort of proselytization, or at least an attempt to preserve the Islamic identity for Muslim minorities, especially the oppressed and neglected, such as in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Myanmar. The IHH classifies mosques as educational and cultural centres and the opposite; thus, reports that cultural centres function as mosques where mosques are not allowed. Its annual report in 2015 elaborates on its efforts to overcome Christian missionaries in Muslim communities (Humanitarian Relief Foundation, 2015: 10); thus, it reveals the clear mission of the IHH, compared to the ambiguous explanation of solidarity in the Islamic Relief literature.

Besides running refugee camps, the IHH provides food packages, distributes donated meat in the Muslim pilgrimage season, supports orphans, establishes orphanages, opens schools, offers phycological support for displaced families, and delivers logistic support for hundreds of schools in Turkey and Syria. One of its main programs is managing bakeries and delivering more than 266 thousand loafs of bread in 2015.

A recent significant IHH contribution to Syrian refugees, in cooperation with a Qatari organisation, was the establishment of a city for orphans in Hatay’s Reyhanh province. The city opened on 18th May 2017 as the best refugee orphanage in the world (Humanitarian Relief Foundation, 2016: RAF & IHH Children Living Center). It aims to protect “Syrian child victims of war, against missionary organisations, crime syndicates and mafia rings, giving them a safe environment to live”, and pass down “solidarity and good feelings of Syrian-Turkish brotherhood to the next generation by caring for and raising Syrian child victims of war, on the

basis of mercy and kindness" (Humanitarian Relief Foundation, 2016: RAF & IHH Children Living Center: 8)[13].

Additionally, the work of the IHH involves different levels of solidarity, coping with Turkey's role in the Syrian crisis. Several reports mention that not only Syrian refugee camps but also spots on the Turkish borders host clinics and recovery places for wounded militants of the Free Syrian Army since 2012 (Krajeski: 62-63). Later, the Turkish government intervened militarily in Northern Syria, in cooperation with the FSA. It should be noticed, however, that, due to the global war on terror, the IHH admits no direct relations with Islamic militants, although it promotes humanitarian diplomacy, plays the role of mediator in international conflicts, and exerts efforts to free hostages through controversial negotiations. Despite similarities in humanitarian programs, the IHH goes further than Islamic Relief in showing Islamic solidarity to refugees, benefiting from a welcoming local government and a supportive environment. Islamic Relief demonstrates significant success in humanitarian relief, with limited possibility of further steps of showing solidarity, as taking political stances or playing a proactive religious role.

4.2.2 Integrating Religious Elements in Service Delivery

In a study of Islamic relief, Marie Juul Peterson notes the cooperation between Muslim NGOs and the British Department of International Development to prevent radicalization, as a soft counter-terrorism approach (Petersen: 136). Islamic Relief was an important partner that grew steadily in terms of national as well as international activities. It now receives funds from international donors and has partnerships with various recognized developmental and humanitarian organisations (Petersen: 138).

One feature of this strategy is minimizing religious elements in the organisation's work and administrative structure. Besides offering services to Muslims and non-Muslims as well, its hiring and aid policies are not based on the religious commitments of the potential employees or beneficiaries (Kirmani and Khan: 3). It also stresses frequently that its activities are not oriented towards proselytization, not to mention militancy. Rather, it usually criticizes similar organisations in the Middle East because they engage in proselytization or militant activities. On the other hand, it praises the neutrality, universality, and tolerance of Western NGOs (Petersen: 148). Strictly humanitarian, the organisation complains of confusing its humanitarian role with activities of other religious bodies which might have political goals (Kirmani and Khan: 9). Despite its seasonal religious activities in Ramadan and Eid Al-Adha which partially fulfil the expectations of its Muslim donors, Islamic Relief, according to Peterson, practices a secular Islam that can easily be integrated with the developmental and

[13] For details on the IHH activities in Syria in 2014-2016, see: Humanitarian Relief Foundation, 2014: Annual Report on The IHH Work in Syria; and Humanitarian Relief Foundation, 2016: RAF & IHH Children Living Center: 12-20.

humanitarian aid philosophy, as it does not question its premises fundamentally (Petersen: 147).

The organisation's programs are not so concerned with refugees in the UK. While Kirmani and Khan stress the importance of faith in rehabilitating the refugees, they find little efforts of Islamic Relief to support them in both religious and humanitarian terms (Kirmani and Khan: 5). However, they find it, as a Muslim organisation, capable of addressing such sensitive issues for the refugees as women's rights and HIV protection. In cases like Bosnia, it encouraged and helped the refugees to return home (Kirmani and Khan: 8).

Salek notes the contradiction between Islamic Relief's initial base, namely the Islamic duty of giving, and the unclarity in its approach to the Islamic faith. Based on analysing the organisation's literature, she finds problematic its confusion of secular and religious concepts and terms of humanitarian relief. To solve this problem, Islamic Relief received funds from the UK Department of International Development in 2010 to research this topic and develop a "faith-literate" approach to humanitarian relief (Salek, 2015: 348). For Islamic Relief, the religious elements play a considerable role in fundraising and labelling it an *Islamic* humanitarian relief organisation but are hardly significant in its organisational structure and designed programs.

Contrarily, the IHH pays more attention to religious elements in its programs. Despite the low profile of its Islamic perspective, it does not only fundraise based on Islamic rituals but also highlights repeatedly its goals of preserving Muslims from missionaries, building mosques and cultural centres, and distributing gifts in Islamic festivals. Furthermore, based on an understanding of the civilizational roles and religious obligations, the organisation considers the materialistic approach to humanitarian relief not enough to preserve human dignity or trace the factors that endanger it. Its humanitarian diplomacy exceeds normal forms of humanitarian relief to include the protection of life and rights of people in zones of conflict, the prevention of deporting asylum seeks, advocating the release of imprisoned or kidnapped civilians in war zones, and mediation as a praiseworthy duty recommended in the Qur'an. This is all proved in many examples in Syria and Pakistan (Tabak:200-206).

4.2.3 Participation in Specific Religious Activities

None of the two studied organisations requires their beneficiaries to participate in specific religious activities. Overwhelmingly sensitive to accusations of proselytization, Islamic Relief does not build mosques or get involved in relevant activities. It claims to embody the Islamic values through contributing to development and capacity building programs. Its seasonal religious programs are available for Muslims as well and non-Muslims and its fundraising based on religious rituals is completely voluntarily. On the other hand, the IHH shows an

interest in activities that preserve the Islamic identity of refugees, such as its orphanage city which aims at protecting orphans from missionaries. However, participation in religious activities is evidently not mandatory.

5. Conclusion

Muslims are obliged by their religion to show solidarity toward each other, although Islam does not mandate one specific method to do that. This duty, however, must be fulfilled, individually or collectively, based on calculations of benefits and harms. Some Muslim scholars distinguish between three, practically interrelated levels of solidarity: fighting for the sake of Allah, calling for Islam, and humanitarian relief. But due to the regional and international war on terror, which is still an undefined concept, only humanitarian relief is now permitted, while proselytization is condemned and fighting criminalized. Inspired by Prophet Muhammed's migration from Mecca to Madinah, Muslims are obligated to support refugees who are forced to flee their countries out of fear, due to persecution based on their race, religion, sect or political opinions. European Muslims, however, face the dilemma of meeting this religious obligation while abiding by the laws of their countries and their legal responsibilities. Thus, they now consider new forms of Islamic solidarity adaptable to their citizenships. They are helped by Islamic jurisprudence which allows for a space for creative understandings and applications.

New interpretations and implementations of Islamic solidarity differ based on how benefits and harms in the surrounding contexts are defined. As the heir of the Ottoman Empire that now witnesses Islamic revival, Turkey increasingly defines "us" more in terms of *Islamic* belonging. Whereas British society is currently disputed between an increasing islamophobia and sympathetic social groups, which restrict its identity into a vague Britishness that might alienate Muslims. Thus, this limits the potentials of European Muslims to rush to support Muslim refugees based on Islamic obligations.

Surrounding realities impact the strategies and outcomes of Islamic humanitarian relief organisations in Turkey and the UK. On the one hand, the friendly environment encourages the Turkish IHH to adopt a multileveled concept of Islamic solidarity, based on religious ties. On the other hand, Islamic Relief must deal with a suspicious, perhaps hostile, society, and thus employs only the concept of humanitarian relief as the appropriate method of solidarity. These two different approaches are reflected in the offered programs, inspiring values, and targeted beneficiaries in the served locations of the two organisations. Their outcomes are expected in light of these limits and opportunities.

Based on the studied cases, I conclude that Islamic humanitarian organisations, although committed to showing solidarity with refugees, develop various programs and strategies. They benefit from flexible dynamics of Islamic jurisprudence to construct several interpretations and

implementations of this solidarity. Islamic organisations have to negotiate spaces of scarification and secularization in their societies. Therefore, in the Turkish case, these implementations now expand considerably, while in the UK, the fact that Islam is a minority religion hinders a similar trajectory.

The ability of governments to accept more refugees will be limited by the increasing islamophobia that also might harden the possibility of social integration of the refugees. European Muslims will struggle to reconcile their religious obligations and citizens' duties, and a new Islamic interpretation of humanitarian relief will continue to serve as the safest path out of this paradox. In Turkish society, Islamic foundations survived decades of secularization, but its current revival might be at risk due to regional and international politics.

Relations among Muslims in these societies will determine the extent of Islamic solidarity toward the refugees, and further research on these relations are therefore needed. Researching the refugees' perceptions of local Muslims in the hosting countries will also help us understand their reactions to Islamic solidarity showed by those citizens.

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